

# KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

## YO! PROGRAM

2001 - 2002 Grant Amount: **\$4 Million**

## FULL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL (FEC)

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### Mission and Vision

To develop an integrated delivery system for In-School Youth ages 14-18 and Out-of-School Youth ages 16-21, that results in academic and employment success. Success is measured by WIA and Youth Opportunity Grant performance standards required by the U.S. Dept of Labor, and additional community standards which may further measure service delivery and the quantity/quality value of the 15 youth development activities. *Vision* To increase the long-term employment of youth who live in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and high-poverty areas. To achieve these goals, a large amount of resources are concentrated in high-poverty areas to bring about community-wide impacts on: employment rates, high school completion rates and college enrollment rates.

### Program Overview

Program goals are to provide comprehensive pre-placement and youth development activities to increase the placement of youth in long-term employment; significantly reduce the secondary school dropout rate; and to increase post-secondary, advanced training, apprenticeship and other placement opportunities available to youth. Job search, job development, and placement assistance is provided through the One Stop Career Center operated by the FEC. Support and follow-up services will be provided for 24 months to ensure performance goals are met and exceeded. A Program Advisory Council comprised of the YO! service providers, other youth service providers and an employer Career Achievement Committee have been established to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- The YO! Center was officially dedicated on July 1, 2001. The renovations were accomplished with assistance from the Excelsior Springs Job Corps youth and the City of Kansas City's Parks & Recreation Department. Significant youth input was received for the design of the center to ensure its youth friendliness.
- Dropout diversion strategies have been developed in conjunction with the Kansas City School District (KCSD) and include the co-location of KCSD staff at the One Stop youth center, access to KCSD's database including attendance and grades and case managers at area schools who work with youth and school staff.
- The City of Kansas City, MO Neighborhood and Community Services Department has matched YO! training funds for the provision of arts-related internships for youth and a \$100,000 grant was received from the Southwestern Bell to support the YO! initiative.
- The Police Athletic League has established a basketball league, and a drum corps for YO! youth, each with a tutoring components. Through the KC Parks & Recreation department, YO! youth have access to softball, golf, photography, art, music, photography and dance.
- A nurse is located on-site and serves as a liaison between YO! youth and local health care providers/clinics, referring youth for services and assists them in enrolling for free or low-cost medical insurance.
- Youth with special needs utilize services provided through Work Incentive Grant, which accommodates youth with physical and mental disabilities including the provision of special equipment and assessment.

### KEY PARTNERS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Alternative Schools including Genesis, DeLaSalle, Don Bosco, KCSD and Alta Vista Charter School** provides reading and math remediation and GED preparation as well as credit retrieval and high school diplomas.
- **Excelsior Springs Job Corps, Youth Build KC**, have on-site recruitment specialists
- **University of Missouri-KC** provides SAT prep training for YO! and RYA youth
- **Learning Exchange**, a School-to-Work initiative, provides access to an Internet database (Pathfinders) for input of job information, resume development, and job search by youth.
- **City of Kansas City, Missouri** provides art-based internships and recreational activities.
- **Mattie Rhodes Counseling Center** offers individual and group counseling as well as access to a nurse.
- **YMCA** operates a GED program for out-of-school youth and community service projects.
- Numerous community-based organizations such as the **Boys and Girls Club**, the YMCA, etc. provide a full complement of youth development activities.

